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RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 1406

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0383

RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY 0053

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 DAR ES SALAAM 000325

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TAGS: PREL PHUM PGOV KDEM TZ

SUBJECT: ZANZIBAR: RIFT BETWEEN CCM AND CUF WIDENS;

TENSIONS ON THE ISLES REMAIN A CONCERN

REF: A. STATE 50701

1B. DAR ES SALAAM 0261

Classified By: Ambassador Mark Green for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

SUMMARY

11. (C) Two months have passed since the inter-party discussions on a powersharing agreement in Zanzibar broke down on March 29. The talks were disrupted when the Central Committee of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party made a surprise call for a referendum on the agreement. Tensions on Pemba Island rose following the May 11 arrest of seven Pemban elders who sent a petition to the UN Development Program Resident Representative asking that "Pembans be left to run Pemba." The seven were released on bail May 16 following six days of interrogation by the Tanzanian National Police with no charges filed. On May 13, leaders of the Civic United Front (CUF) handed over to the press the entire confidential proceedings of 14 months of negotiations between CCM and CUF, including the final signed agreement the two parties had forwarded to their respective Central Committees (Ref B). CUF also sent a letter to President Kikwete demanding that further reconciliation discussions be only between the Secretary General of CUF, and President Karume of Zanzibar, mediated by Kikwete.

12. (C) On May 19, President Karume told the press he would invite key CUF leaders to the Zanzibar State House to continue negotiations, on the pre-condition that CUF recognize him as President of Zanzibar. (NOTE: CUF has refused to recognize Karume since the 2005 elections, claiming that the vote count was not transparent and the results inaccurate.) CUF leaders responded May 21 by announcing impeachment proceedings against President Karume based on Karume's admission that Pembans are underrepresented in the GOZ since "they did not vote for CCM in 2005." Since late April, Ambassador Green and Embassy officers have been consulting with like-minded diplomats and working steadily behind the scenes with State House contacts, senior and mid-level CCM officials and members of the CUF leadership to urge signals or actions from either side that could break the reconciliation deadlock. The Ambassador is preparing a policy speech to be delivered in Zanzibar with a call to tone down the rhetoric and work cooperatively toward a resolution. End summary.

13. (SBU) On the late evening of May 11, seven Pemban senior citizens (average age over 60 years) were arrested in their homes and taken into custody. The elders were interrogated by the Tanzanian National Police for six days at an unknown location about why they and five other Pembans had drafted, signed, and delivered a petition on May 8 to the Resident Rep of UNDP in Dar es Salaam. The five-page petition outlined in detail the tiny percentage of Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and even Office Directors in the current GOZ who are Pembans. The document expressed the view that since Pembans are underrepresented in and receive minimal government services from the GOZ, Pemban people should "have our own island of Pemba and let the Unguja people have their own island."

14. (SBU) A total of twelve names and signatures were on the petition: the signatories claimed that they represent at least 10,000 Pemban citizens. While, none of the elders are CUF leaders, they are all members of the Civic United Front. Most were also eyewitnesses to the 1964 Zanzibar revolution. The Minister in the Vice President's Office for Union Affairs, Mohamed Seif Khatib, and other Union officials portrayed the petition as a demand to secede from the Union which could be considered a "treasonous act." However, independent legal experts noted the actual request was for Pemba to have an autonomous administration to govern Pemban affairs, yet remain part of the United Republic of Tanzania, similar to the current Government of Zanzibar-Union relationship.

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15. (SBU) The well-respected University of Dar es Salaam law professor and political analyst, Issa Shivji, publicly echoed the views of numerous newspaper editorials, stating that the Union government had "overreacted" by arresting the Pemban senior citizens and treating them as criminals. Shivji noted the political and economic marginalization of Pemba is not a secret. "The issue here is not the Pemban people wanting to break away or have an autonomous government, but why," Shivji stressed. While acknowledging that many Pembans' grievances have roots back to the era of the 1964 revolution in Zanzibar, Shivji believes that a better way to resolve the dispute would be that 1) the Union government listen to the elders concerns and 2) the Government of Zanzibar "stop ignoring the social and economic disparities between Unguja and Pemba."

16. (SBU) Shivji added that both CCM and CUF had negotiated a powersharing agreement in good faith for 14-months and whatever had been agreed upon, all sides need to go along with it. He reiterated that Pemba is being marginalized and "CCM is coming on too strong with its propaganda." Due partially to the public outcry over its strong-handed approach toward the Pemban elders, they were all released May 16 on bond. However, Inspector General of the Police, Said Mwema, warned that they could be called in for further questioning. The Tanzanian National Police's investigation is focused on whether any "outsiders" had influenced the Pemban elders' actions or not.

CCM Leadership Blames the Opposition; CUF Retaliates

17. (U) Also on May 11, the CCM's Secretary General Yusuf Makamba broke his silence of nearly five weeks concerning the break down of reconciliation talks between the CCM and CUF by calling a press conference to attack the CUF leadership. Makamba asserted that CUF had "misrepresented to the public" that the two sides had reached agreement during their 14 months of negotiations. Makamba, flanked by Kingunge Ngombale-Mwiru, a senior CCM advisor and chief negotiator during the talks, characterized CUF as being the sole cause of the standoff by refusing to accept CCM's suggestion that the question of a powersharing government in Zanzibar be decided through a referendum. On May 13, CUF called its own

press conference and handed out the entire confidential minutes of the fourteen months of negotiations to the press, including copies of the documents signed by the representatives of both parties showing that an agreement had been reached. CUF leaders claimed all points were agreed on, including the structure of a powersharing government and that CUF would recognize Pres Karume once the powersharing was implemented.

¶8. (C) Just days after his return from the U.S. (Ref A), President Karume jumped into the fray, calling his own May 20 press conference in Stone Town to announce he would meet with Malim Seif Hamad and "invite him and the CUF leaders to the State House for dinner" if and only if, CUF recognizes him as the President of Zanzibar. Although in November 2005, the newly-elected CUF Zanzibar House of Representative members took their seats in the House, to date they refuse to recognize the results of the October 2005 presidential vote, stating the election was unfair and the presidential results not accurate. CUF members walk out when President Karume addresses the House of Representatives and refuse to attend all official functions where he is present.

¶9. (C) Karume is deeply and personally offended by this stance. Recognition of Karume as president was CUF's strong card in the inter-party negotiations. The draft agreement CUF gave the press May 13 revealed that CUF would recognize Karume only after a powersharing government was in place. Karume's demand that recognition be a precondition to resume inter-party negotiations was obviously a political ploy aimed at trying to redefine the public debate.

¶10. (C) Almost immediately, CUF "struck back", announcing May 22 that the CUF House of Representative members would begin impeachment procedures because Karume was not upholding the constitution of Zanzibar. CUF leadership claimed that during

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his press conference, Karume had conceded that his administration sidelined the Pembans because the people of Pemba did not vote for him in 2005. "Is there an article in the Constitution that allows the President to discriminate against citizens who did not vote for him?" stressed Hon. Hamad Rashid Mohamed, CUF opposition leader in the Union Parliament. Hon. Rashid noted that the Constitutional impeachment procedures require a written motion signed by half of the House of Representative members. Since CUF holds only 24 of the 77 seats in the House, a successful impeachment effort appears to be a long shot.

¶11. (C) In the midst of this exchange of blows, President Kikwete attempted to de-escalate rising tensions between the two parties on May 15, by urging resumption of the Zanzibar reconciliation talks. He claimed that the negotiators only differed on "the procedures of how to implement the agreement." However, our contacts from both parties have confirmed that the CCM and CUF positions have solidified and emotions are running too deep to characterize the rift as merely "procedural differences." Along with moderate leaders from CCM, CUF, and like-minded diplomats, we believe that President Kikwete's public statements have not addressed the seriousness of the Zanzibar political standoff. While privately we are told by the Foreign Minister and CCM party insiders that President Kikwete has a "plan" and will take action "soon", to date he has not done so.

Other Views and Concerns

¶12. (C) CCM: Hon. Jerry Silaa, an elected Dar es Salaam City Councilor and member of the CCM National Executive Committee (NEC), told AF/E Office Director James Knight May 20 that many CCM Zanzibar members do not even want to hear about or mention powersharing: the word itself "makes them nauseated."

Silaa admitted that the CCM Mainland members, himself included, were caught by surprise by the CCM Zanzibar hard-liners' organizing to block the reconciliation agreement

during the March 27-28 party meeting and to successfully prevent the CCM Central Committee from giving its blessing to the powersharing agreement in Zanzibar.

¶13. (C) Hon. Mohamed Dewji, a Mainland CCM Member of Parliament, stressed in the same meeting that a stable, peaceful political environment is pivotal to Tanzania's and Zanzibar's economic growth. He noted many CCM Mainland members are concerned that the Zanzibar impasse has "become too emotional." While Dewji does not believe that President Karume has totally ignored the development of Pemba, he confirmed that Karume's refusal to compromise is because the CUF has not recognized him as president. Dewji and Silaa both insisted the only person able to tackle and resolve the current standoff is President Kikwete. They also hinted at the frustration of many CCM Mainland members with CCM Zanzibar, with Silaa suggesting it might be better to leave CCM Zanzibar "on its own." Dewji bemoaned that too much of CCM's political and financial capital has been spent over the past decade to "help CCM Zanzibar to win their elections."

¶14. (C) CUF: Hon. Hamad Rashid Mohamed told AF/E Office Director Knight on May 19, that President Kikwete's inaction to resolve the standoff in Zanzibar is creating a leadership vacuum in Tanzania that could be "dangerous". He and other CUF party leaders spent the May 17-18 weekend on Pemba Island meeting with their constituents to calm concerns and frustration. However, nearly two and a half years after President Kikwete's inaugural December 2005 address to the Parliament promising to do all in his power to bring the Isles of Zanzibar together, "very few have hope or see a way forward," Rashid emphasized.

Comment: Kikwete Has Not Closed the Deal

¶15. (C) This crescendo of words and actions is strengthening the position of hard-liners in both CUF and the CCM. In addition to the Ambassador's back channel efforts, we are in daily contact with moderates in both parties and with academics and neutral observers. They share our concern that

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President Kikwete's lack of action has allowed the gap to widen and both sides have solidified their positions. Most agree that President Kikwete alone must resolve this impasse. We believe that Kikwete, in his role as Union President, needs to give Karume a clear message not to obstruct the reconciliation process and that the agreement that was negotiated from January 2007 to February 2008 should endorsed by both sides and implemented as soon as possible.

¶16. (C) To date, Kikwete has not taken action either publicly or privately to bring "into the fold" the CCM Zanzibar hard-liners supporting Karume's refusal to consider any GOZ powersharing arrangement before 2010. In the short window of time following President Karume's return from the U.S. and the commencement of Kikwete's African Union obligations and his current trip to Japan, Kikwete could have mediated a meeting between the CUF leaders and Karume, but did not do so. As we enter the second half of 2008, with the 2010 Mainland and Zanzibar elections only two years away, we are concerned that if a resolution to this impasse is not found soon, 2010 could produce, at best, a repeat of the undemocratic and often violent scenarios of the 1995, 2000 and 2005 Zanzibar elections.

GREEN